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Alison Arnold Writes...

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Labor Day sounds the death knell of summer. School begins and the first bits of color show in the maple trees. But Labor Day no longer marks the beginning of the mass exodus that took place when Duxbury was essentially a summer resort.

In those days, lights disappeared in many of the houses right after Labor Day. By Sept. 15 more houses were dark as that was the end of the summer renting season. By Oct. 15, especially on Powder Point, there were only a few houses with lights.

Nowadays, there is no notable change. Nearly every house is open all year round, although the traffic lessens a bit.

It took a good 2 hours to drive from Duxbury to Boston, Route 53 was Route 3 and it wound through Hanover, Weymouth Landing and Quincy. There was an alternate route through Scituate, Hingham and Cohasset, but that took even longer.

Percy Walker, Duxbury's only real estate dealer in those days, once said to me: "When the new road is built, you'll see property values soar. Duxbury will be a bedroom for Boston." How right he was!

But I often think of the pleasant leisurely days when Duxbury was a country town. At dawn I could hear the roosters crowing at the Reynolds Farm. Hens cackled triumphantly on summer mornings.

Bluebirds were returning each year to the little bird houses on my maple trees. "Bob Whites" whistled cheerfully all day long and the whippoorwills cried plaintively each evening. But speeding automobiles and raucous motor cycles have taken their place.

The pleasant whir of the old-fashioned lawnmower has been replaced by the snarl of the powermotor. There is no longer the whir of the windmill.

We have washers and dryers and freezers and microwave ovens and all kinds of marvelous inventions that are now taken for granted.

Labor Day now ends in a flurry of cocktail parties. A few people return to their winter homes. But Duxbury is now a busy suburb.

To be sure, we have gained much. But have we lost something?
